



Patient Assessment Standard of Care

Standards articulate a minimum level of practice to which social workers can be held legally accountable. The following guidelines assist the Social Work Department to prevent, diagnose, treat, and manage biopsychosocial conditions (*Hospital and Health Networks*, Nov 2000).

The Profile of Adaptation to Life, Clinical Scale (PAL-C) is the screening tool used to identify at-risk patients. All new outpatients and those inpatients who have not completed the PAL-C in the previous 4 weeks will be screened. The PAL-C may be used for follow-up patients at the discretion of the social worker at a minimum of 4-week intervals. Possible risk is identified by a domain score that falls two standard deviations below the mean on the PAL-C scoring sheet. Below are the psychosocial risk indicators and screening, assessment, and documentation standards.

I. Psychosocial indicators

The PAL-C domains listed below are in *italics*.

High Risk

Assessment completed and documented:

Inpatient—within 24 hours

Outpatient/Day Hospital—same day

- Lives alone
- Over age 65
- Non-English-speaking
- *Negative emotions*
- *Alcohol and/or drug problems*

In addition to the indicators listed above, the Clinical Center SWD considers the following populations as high risk: bone marrow transplant, organ transplant, pediatric, and critical care.

Moderate Risk

Assessment completed and documented:

Inpatient—within 48 hours

Outpatient/Day Hospital—same day

- *Poor well-being*
- *Poor income management*
- *Physical symptoms*
- *Poor close-interpersonal relations*
- *Poor close-child-interpersonal relations*

Low Risk

Screening completed and documented:

Inpatient—prior to discharge if LOS < 3 days

Outpatient/Day Hospital—same day; followup within 72 hours

- *Social activity*
- *Self-nurturing*
- *Personal growth*
- *Nutrition/exercise*

II. Assessment

A. Social History

- Current residence and how long
- Married/partnered—how many years
- Number of children and where they reside
- Religious affiliations—level of support/conflict
- Family—level of support/conflict
- Friends/caregivers—level of support/conflict
- Work/finances/insurance
- Safe sex practices as indicated (adolescents age 11–18, HIV populations)
- Family/guardian involvement in patient's care/treatment

B. Educational Assessment

- Patient's readiness to learn and preferred learning method
- Level of education

C. Physical Symptom Management

- Brief summary of impact of illness and treatment on psychosocial functioning of patient and family
- Coping strategies—pre-morbid and current
- Understanding of disease
- Expectation(s) of research participation and NIH
- Discharge planning needs

D. Psychiatric History

- Patient's developmental stage
- Interpersonal adjustment
- Intrapsychic problems
- Life challenges—previous adaptive and/or maladaptive management of significant life events
- History of mental illness/counseling/therapy
- Alcohol and drug use—including family history and spouse
- Mood state and affect at time of interview
- Current and/or history of psychotropic medications

III. Psychosocial Formulation (based upon specific indicators)

IV. Interventions (based upon specific indicators)

V. Glossary

Alcohol and/or Drug Problems—Use of alcohol or drugs interferes with activities and responsibilities of daily living.

Living Alone—amount of support available.

Negative Emotions—Presents as either depression or anxiety.

Non-English-speaking—Culture and language barriers.

Nutrition/Exercise—Level of physical self-care.

Over 65—Self-sufficient or frail and dependent.

Personal Growth—Level of involvement in activities that promote personal growth.

Physical Symptoms Management—Relationship of emotional and physical health.

Poor Income Management—Adequacy and management of financial resources.

Poor Close-Child-Interpersonal Relations—Quality of the relationships.

Poor Close-Interpersonal Relations—Quality of the relationships.

Poor Well-Being—Negative adjustment to life, low self-esteem, low level of enjoyment in life.

Self-Nurturing—Time set aside for self-reflection.

Social Activity—Frequency of social activity.



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